

Donations to Political Parties

2018

*Report to the Chairman of Dáil Éireann pursuant
to section 4(1) of the Electoral Act 1997*



Coimisiún um Chaighdeán in Oifigí Poiblí
Standards in Public Office Commission

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Foreword

I am pleased to furnish this report to the Ceann Comhairle in accordance with section 4(1) of the Electoral Act 1997, as amended. The report relates to annual donation statements/certificate of monetary donations and statutory declarations, in respect of 2018, furnished to the Standards in Public Office Commission by political parties, pursuant to section 24 of the Act.



Justice Daniel O'Keeffe
Chairperson
Standards in Public Office Commission
July 2019

Chapter 1: Introduction

Not later than 31 March each year, all registered political parties are required to furnish to the Standards in Public Office Commission (the Standards Commission) a donation statement covering the preceding calendar year.

All political parties registered in 2018 were obliged to furnish their donation statements by 31 March 2019. During 2018, there were 19 political parties registered and obliged to furnish a donation statement.

As of the 31 March deadline, 15 political parties had complied fully with the statutory requirements. The remaining four statements were received by 15 April 2019. All parties are now substantively in compliance.

A list of registered political parties required to file a donation statement is available at Appendix 1.

Chapter 2: Donations disclosed by political parties

The donation statement provided by a political party must show whether or not, in the preceding calendar year, the party received a donation or donations exceeding €1,500 from the same source. Disclosed donations should include the name, description and postal address of the person by or on whose behalf the donation was made.

The maximum value of donations that a political party may accept from the same person in the same calendar year is €2,500. A party may not accept a corporate or business donation in excess of €200 unless the donor is registered with the Commission as a Corporate Donor. A political party is also precluded from accepting foreign donations from an individual (other than an Irish citizen) who resides outside the island of Ireland. Similarly, no donation of any value may be accepted from a body corporate or an unincorporated body of persons which does not keep an office in the island of Ireland.

Amount of donations disclosed by political parties

The total value of donations disclosed by political parties during 2018 was €159,819. Appendix 2 shows in detail the donations disclosed by political parties.

A summary of the donations disclosed is shown below:

Party	Total Donations Disclosed €
Fianna Fáil	2,500
Fine Gael	81,899
Labour Party	22,150
Sinn Féin	48,470
Workers and Unemployed Action	4,800
Total	159,819

Chapter 3: Accounting Units

An Accounting Unit is defined in the Electoral Acts as a branch or other subsidiary organisation of a political party that, in any particular year, receives a donation, the value of which exceeds €100. A responsible person, in relation to an accounting unit, means the treasurer or any other person responsible for dealing with donations to the unit.

An accounting unit that receives a monetary donation of more than €100 must open and maintain an account in a financial institution and must lodge that donation, and any further monetary donations received, of whatever value, to that account.

By 31 March each year, the responsible person of an accounting unit must furnish to the Standards Commission:

- a statement from the financial institution where the political donations account was opened, specifying the transactions that have taken place in relation to the account during the preceding year (bank statement), and
- a certificate signed by him/her, stating that all monetary donations received during the preceding year were lodged to the account and that all amounts debited from the account were used for political purposes (Certificate of Monetary Donations), and
- a statutory declaration signed by him/her stating that, to the best of the person's knowledge and belief, the certificate is correct in every material respect and that all reasonable action has been taken in order to satisfy him/herself as to the accuracy of the certificate.

It is an offence under Section 25(1) (c) of the Act for the treasurer/responsible person of an accounting unit to fail to comply with this requirement.

The Standards Commission continues to note that a number of accounting units flagged difficulties that they have had in complying with the legislation. The difficulties largely related to the requirement to provide statements from financial institutions.

Issues identified included:

- accessing bank statements for the preceding calendar year in time for the 31 March deadline;
- retrieving political party bank account statements due to a change of responsible person; and
- accounts closed on foot of anti-money laundering legislation.

The Standards Commission notes that accounting units have reported that the process of opening a political donation account may be protracted and can lead to a delay in the lodging of the donation that requires a branch to be considered an accounting unit for the purposes of the Electoral Act.

Table of returns received from political parties with Accounting Units

Political Party	Total number of accounting units	Returns Received before deadline	Returns Received After deadline
Fine Gael	38	36	2
Fianna Fáil	36	36	0
The Labour Party	31	19	12
Sinn Féin	9	4	5
The Green Party	18	13	5
Social Democrats	8	8	0
Solidarity – People Before Profit	11	6	5
Total	151	122	29

Funds held by accounting units in 2018

Accounting units are not required to submit a donation statement to the Commission.

This makes it difficult for the Commission to ascertain the source of monies held in the political donation accounts of accounting units. The aggregate closing balance held by accounting units in relation to 2018 was €1,150,073.86. The Commission continues to be of the view that further refinement of the legislation is required to ensure that there is full transparency in respect of accounting units.

Chapter 4: Publication of Statutory Documentation

In accordance with section 24(7)(a) of the Act, the Commission has today laid the donation statements/statutory declarations furnished by political parties before each House of the Oireachtas.

In accordance with section 73 of the Act, the Commission has made the donation statements/statutory declarations available for public inspection and copying at its offices on 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2. The information is also available on the Commission's website, www.sipo.ie.

Appendix 1: Registered Political Parties in 2018

Communist Party of Ireland
Direct Democracy Ireland
Fianna Fáil
Fine Gael
Fís Nua
The Green Party
Human Dignity Alliance
Identity Ireland
Independents 4 Change
Irish Democratic Party
Kerry Independence Alliance
The Labour Party
RENUA Ireland
Sinn Féin
Social Democrats
Solidarity – People Before Profit
United People
The Workers' Party
Workers and Unemployed Action

Appendix 2: Details of donations disclosed by political parties for 2018

Fianna Fáil

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Mr. Denis Mee	Individual	2,500
Total		2,500

Fine Gael

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Maria Bailey, TD	Individual	1,948
Seán Barrett, TD	Individual	1,660
Colm Brophy, TD	Individual	1,660
Richard Bruton, TD	Individual	2,084
Peter Burke, TD	Individual	1,660
Catherine Byrne, TD	Individual	1,529
Ciarán Cannon, TD	Individual	1,628
Joe Carey, TD	Individual	1,520
Deirdre Clune, MEP	Individual	1,833
Simon Coveney, TD	Individual	1,771
Jim Daly, TD	Individual	1,580
Michael D'Arcy, TD	Individual	1,580
Pat Deering, TD	Individual	1,593
Regina Doherty, TD	Individual	1,693
Paschal Donohoe, TD	Individual	1,921
Andrew Doyle, TD	Individual	1,653
Bernard Durkan, TD	Individual	1,799
Damien English, TD	Individual	2,000
Alan Farrell, TD	Individual	1,667
Frances Fitzgerald, TD	Individual	1,667
Charles Flanagan, TD	Individual	1,710
Brendan Griffin, TD	Individual	1,580
Simon Harris, TD	Individual	1,935
Brian Hayes, MEP	Individual	2,115
Martin Heydon, TD	Individual	1,624
Heather Humphreys, TD	Individual	1,736

Sean Kelly, MEP	Individual	1,874
Enda Kenny, TD	Individual	1,590
Seán Kyne, TD	Individual	1,650
Josepha Madigan, TD	Individual	2,296
Helen McEntee, TD	Individual	1,680
Mairead McGuinness, MEP	Individual	1,550
Joe McHugh, TD	Individual	1,695
Tony McLoughlin, TD	Individual	1,590
Mary Mitchell O'Connor, TD	Individual	1,610
Dara Murphy, TD	Individual	1,638
Eoghan Murphy, TD	Individual	2,273
Hildegarde Naughton, TD	Individual	1,660
Tom Neville, TD	Individual	1,651
Michael Noonan, TD	Individual	2,044
Kate O'Connell, TD	Individual	1,520
Patrick O'Donovan, TD	Individual	1,653
Fergus O'Dowd, TD	Individual	1,816
John Paul Phelan, TD	Individual	1,724
Noel Rock, TD	Individual	1,667
David Staunton, TD	Individual	1,580
Leo Varadkar, TD	Individual	1,992
Total		81,899

Labour Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Senator Ivana Bacik	Individual	1,950
Joan Burton, TD	Individual	2,400
Brendan Howlin, TD	Individual	2,400
Senator Kevin Humphries	Individual	1,800
Alan Kelly, TD	Individual	2,400
Senator Gerald Nash	Individual	2,400
Jan O'Sullivan, TD	Individual	2,400
Willie Penrose, TD	Individual	2,400
Brendan Ryan, TD	Individual	2,400
Sean Sherlock, TD	Individual	1,600
Total		22,150

Sinn Féin

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Gerry Adams, TD	Individual	2,460
Lynn Boylan, MEP	Individual	1,664
Matt Carthy, MEP	Individual	2,496
Senator Máire Devine	Individual	1,992
Pearse Doherty, TD	Individual	2,496
Dessie Ellis, TD	Individual	2,750*
Martin Ferris, TD	Individual	2,496
Senator Paul Gavan	Individual	2,665**
Senator Pádraig Mac Lochlainn	Individual	2,460
Mary Lou McDonald, TD	Individual	2,500
Denise Mitchell, TD	Individual	2,655**
Imelda Munster, TD	Individual	2,460
Liadh Ní Riada, MEP	Individual	2,496
Senator Niall O'Donnghaile	Individual	2,500
Donncha O'Laoighaire	Individual	2,460
Louise O'Reilly	Individual	2,460
Aengus O'Snodaigh	Individual	2,000
Maurice Quinlivan	Individual	2,460
Brian Stanley, TD	Individual	2,500
Senator Fintan Warfield	Individual	2,500
Total		48,470
<i>Donations returned</i>		<i>580</i>
<i>Total less donations returned</i>		<i>47,890</i>

*€250 returned to donor

**€165 returned to donor

Workers & Unemployed Action

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Cllr. Pat English	Individual	2,400
Seamus Healy TD	Individual	2,400
Total		4,800